

# The JADE GOD

by Mary Imlay Taylor

## CHAPTER IV

Continued from last week  
Mark lifted his head. "No, I wasn't there by any chance. I don't know her, Mrs. Lynn."

His hostess looked perplexed. "But she should be your cousin; there are so few Byrams. You must come in on the Tom Byram side."

Mark caught the gleeful malice in Landon's eyes.

"No," he replied flatly. "Not on any side. You're mistaken, Mrs. Lynn. I'm not related to the Utica Byrams."

She was a little taken aback. But a woman of the world passes such things over lightly; she turned the conversation swiftly, though her eyes flashed one keen question at Landon. He reddened and moved uneasily in his chair. It was Pam who spoke softly to Mark.

"I'm so glad! Those Utica Byrams are so stodgy. I didn't see how you could belong!"

"It might be a hop out of kin, you know," he answered quickly, and then, in an undertone: "Suppose I'm not a Byram at all; what then?"

"Oh, but it's your name!" She laughed, as if at a huge joke.

"But if it wasn't my name?"

She lifted her shining eyes, mischief in them. "What was it Juliet said? 'A rose by any other name?'"

"Do you remember about that?" he asked her daringly.

"The play?" she laughed out-right; "of course I do!"

"With Romeo it was love at first sight," said Mark.

Again the flame that played in his eyes held hers. She drew a quick breath, smiling, clinging desperately to the conventions. She did not know that prison had made a pagan of him, like a pagan he was wooing her, and he knew he had no right to do it. The dinner ended too soon for him. He outstayed the other guests. There was music and a little dancing again.

Burleson took off a few to the opera. Pam taught Mark some new dance steps in the deserted ballroom. Landon had been carried off against his will by Burleson. Mrs. Lynn was in the drawing room.

"I can't see where you could have been!" Pam laughed. "Why, you know steps I never heard of—and not one I know!"

"Nemansland has only one—the lockstep"—Mark replied recklessly.

He might have stayed too late but for Mrs. Lynn's entrance. She sent him away, smiling graciously. If he was not a Utica Byram he was something of a man. She was woman enough under her worldliness to be a little thrilled by that.

Before she knew what she was doing she had told him her days at home.

"But of course, Archie will bring you," she ended, suddenly cooling.

Pam said nothing. She had told him all these things already, and another — she was in the habit of riding her pet horse in the park mornings. This was something Archie Landon did not know; she did not want Landon and Banks there!

It was after he left the house that Mark had his bad quarter of an hour. He had gone there as an impostor, on the wages of two worthless boys, under an assumed name. It would be black enough for a mere joke, but he was an ex-convict. Given that, and they found him out, he would deserve something worse than mere expulsion.

"A man does mad things when he's in love!" he thought.

But it troubled him. He tramped the streets, thinking of it, wretched at heart. It was past midnight when he went in search of Teddy Banks. He wanted his own clothes.

Besides, it was part of the bargain to report to the young scapegrace. He found Banks alone and sulky—his rooms, a bachelor's suite, thick with cigarette smoke.

"I won," said Mark, beginning to take off his coat.

Banks stared at him, biting his cigarette.

"I know! Archie's been here, ripping mad. What the deuce did you do there, anyway?"

"Got asked to dinner. Did he pay his wages?"

Teddy nodded. "He did, and swore he'd like to murder me!" Come, what happened? Tell me!

It's beastly to be shut out of the fun and only get a ragging from a chucklehead.

"Nothing happened. I was well received and asked to dinner."

"By the great lady herself?" Teddy slapped his knee, laughing uproariously. "What did I say? Any

fellow with a clean shirt! I got my money out of Archie."

He went over this again and again, giggling at it. Mark, sick with disgust of him, soiled by the thought that this boy had opened the door to love for him, changed back into his own rough clothes, flinging the borrowed raiment down. The violence of his action drew Teddy's eyes.

"Archie says you threw back five hundred dollars. Why?"

"You'd better ask me why I took it in the first place," Mark retorted bitterly. "I think I was mad."

Some remnant of conscious stirred young Banks.

"It was only for tonight!" he called after him thickly. "Only for tonight; that's flat, remember—you can't go back there, you know!"

Mark thought the boy had been drinking again. He did not answer. He shut the door on him and went out to walk the streets all night. There was even an exhilarating freedom in doing that.

Presently, a glow showed in the eastern sky; against it the skyscrapers were blocked out in strange pyramidal shapes. The city lights went out; the day dawned.

It was nine o'clock when Mark Grant, sleepless and breakfastless, went back to Fosdick's office. Today he would receive his aunt's legacy. It would give him the means to go away. He remembered his relief at that thought yesterday—today it meant exile!

Fosdick, coming in to find him there, waiting, was no more cordial than on the previous day. But he took the matter up; it was apparent that his idea was to get done with it and with Mark.

"You'll have some papers to sign," he said bluntly. "Come over to the courthouse; there are formalities."

Fosdick showed scant courtesy, but the money was intact—thanks to the little lawyer's scrupulous care.

"I wouldn't have let her leave it to you if I'd had my way," he said bluntly, as they closed the business up.

Mark reddened in spite of himself. "Mr. Fosdick, do you remember Herbert Burleson?"

The lawyer shot another look at him. "Sure, I do! He's the great Burleson now. Why d'you ask?"

"I saw him yesterday."

Fosdick started, and then he remembered that it might have been the merest chance. He nodded.

"Very likely. He's got a kind of palace here."

Mark, folding some papers in his pocket, assented thoughtfully. "He was with my uncle that last day; he knew there was no quarrel between us. He could have testified for me."

Fosdick drummed on his desk. "It's late to think of that," he said coldly.

"I tried to bring it out; no one believed me."

Fosdick shrugged. "Are you trying to imagine Burleson will clear you now?"

Mark rose. He had money in his pocket; he looked grimly down at the sneering little man.

"A man has a right to fight for his life, Mr. Fosdick. I'm young still. I've got red blood in me—I'm going to fight for my life."

Fosdick looked him over thoughtfully. For the first time he seemed to realize the man who had come back. There was power in the figure and the face; Mark stood upright, unshamed. In spite of himself the little lawyer was impressed. But he fingered the papers on his desk impatiently; he was not one to admit he had been touched by anything.

"Better go west and live it down," he advised dryly; "no easy thing to dig up evidence after fifteen years. It would take your twenty thousand all right. I suppose—when you find the evidence—"

"Yes," said Mark slowly—"then I might—but not until then. Good-day, Mr. Fosdick."

The lawyer nodded curtly, but he turned in his chair and followed the young man with his eyes. For the first time a doubt had stirred in him. Plenty of innocent people suffered—but, pshaw! This boy had been fairly tried. It was a plain murder for money. He was hard up at the time, and he was his uncle's heir. Fosdick pursed his lips. He had not tried to claim the fortune yet; it was rolling up; but he would—of course he would! He nodded to himself and went back to his work. He had always believed Mark guilty.

Mark had set his face westward. It seemed the natural destiny of men such as he. Perhaps that vague country which used to be termed "out West," by easterners,

was no longer vague and no longer offered as great opportunities for rehabilitation; a man could scarcely expect in these days, to get out of touch with the things he left behind him, and there were no more great fortunes within easy reach of pick and shovel, but there would be a greater space to breathe, to look around, to live down the past.

He went steadily about it; he had long ago half shaped his probable course. Now he looked up localities, recalled the advice that his friend, the warden, had given him, and even went so far as to inquire the price of railway fares. Yet he did not go.

Days had passed and he had held to his resolution. He had never returned to the Burleson house. Better that Pam should think him uncouth, uncivilized, than that he should transgress again. The very thought of his reckless entrance there, his violation of all the amenities of social life, made his cheeks burn. He loved the girl; it was no romance of a day; and because it was real, because it was a thing above and apart from the rest of his life, he would see her no more. The suffering was his. The surprise and annoyance might be hers; but she would soon forget—he would not go there, but he could not go away.

Night after night he walked the square on which the Burleson house stood; day after day he put off his journey. It was folly—it was idleness—but the spell held him. Pam's eyes, her voice, the touch of her small hand, haunted him. To go away from the city where she dwelt would be exile.

There was always a chance here of a glimpse of her, himself unseen. Once he did see her. She was going out with Mrs. Lynn, in the Burleson car. He glimpsed her face, a little pale, framed in a great hat, the furs muffling her; he saw her pass and the day was charged for him. After that, he did not plan to go for three days.

Once he saw Landon going to the house, and hated the boy for it. He had no right there—after what he did! Mark thought hotly, and grew hotter when he realized the part he himself, had played. Once he saw Pam on horseback in the park. Screened by the trees he watched her in the sunshine and thought her the most beautiful thing in the world!

That day he nearly broke his resolution. It seemed as if he must speak to her. That night he summoned himself to the bar of his

own judgment and condemned himself. No honest man would have gone into another's house under a false name and made love to an innocent girl. He would go West in the morning.

## SPOILED-FOOD THREAT SEEN IN LACK OF FREEZING UNITS

Spillage of "millions of tons" of food is threatened by Government refusal to provide materials for construction of new quick-freezing plants, Senator Aiken, (R., Vt.) said in disclosing plans for an investigation by a Senate agriculture subcommittee.

The committee expects to learn why applications for food processing facilities are being denied in light of the fact that the Government is urging the production of more and more food—even though millions of tons that will be produced in response to its appeal will undoubtedly spoil unless preserving facilities are provided.

The committee, headed by Senator Smith (D, S. C.), will call witnesses from farm and consumer organization, the Department of Agriculture and the War Production Board.

## To Hasten Victory

No American wants this war to go one minute beyond the time we can bring it to a victorious end. To hasten that victory—to save possibly the lives of millions of our boys on our far flung fronts—it is imperative that every American do his part in the Second War Loan. There is an investment to fit every purse. The most you can do is little enough compared with the sacrifice offered by our boys in service. They give their lives—you lend your money.

**VETERANS—You men who fought the last War—make this your job. To see that no American boy shall fall because a lack of scrap deprived him of a fighting chance.**

**SCRAP SLACKERS CAN LOSE THIS WAR!**

It's squarely up to you. The mills need scrap to make the steel to go across the sea as ships, and tanks, and guns. They need it now—and in the months to come.

For all new steel must be 50% scrap—and the mills are running out. They haven't enough for even 30 days more production—then they'll be shutting down.

Unless you get to work. Unless you go into your basement and your attic and rout out the junk that's there. Talk about it to your friends and neighbors—you men who

know what war is like. Tell them... "Don't be a scrap slacker. Get your scrap ready for the drive that starts next Monday!" Then get to work and help them do it.

We're out to fill the junk yards—to make every salvage depot a towering tribute to our fighting men. And don't think the job is done when the scrap starts piling up. Because the war must end before the need for scrap is over.

Do this to help make sure it ends our way!

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Watch this paper for details of the big scrap drive and what you must do to help

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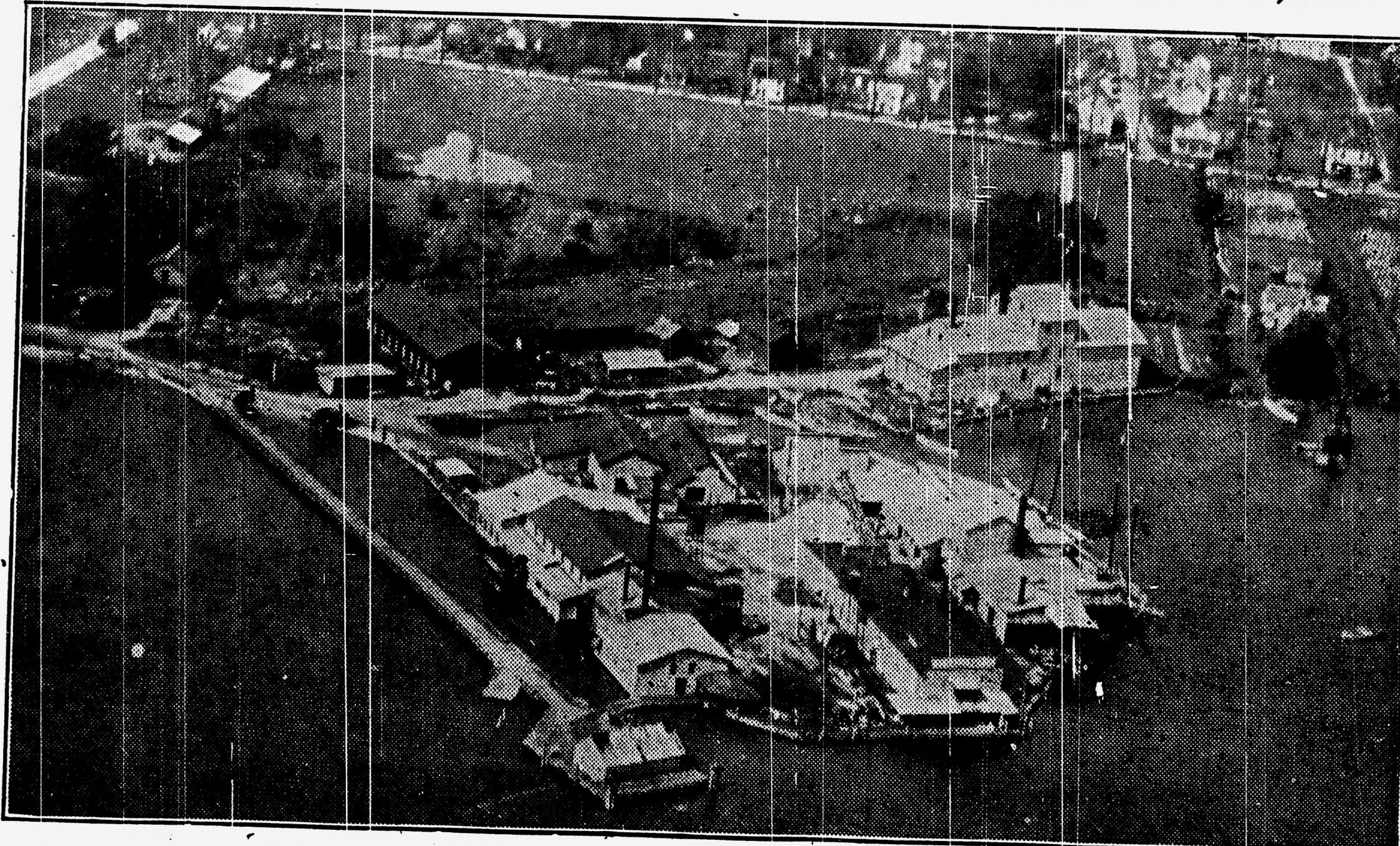


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